



Sounding Board Report

On the Final Plan for Designing Better Bus Service in Durham

May 22, 2012

Submitted to Durham City Council (June 18, 2012)

Table of Contents

ABOUT THE DESIGNING BETTER BUS SERVICE – SOUNDING BOARD	3
<i>What is Designing Better Bus Service in Durham (DBBS)</i>	3
<i>What is a Sounding Board</i>	3
<i>Sounding Board Members</i>	3
<i>Meeting Dates</i>	4
SUMMARY OF SOUNDING BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS.....	5
<i>Scenario 1 – Sounding Board Recommendations</i>	5
<i>Scenario 2 & 3 – Sounding Board Recommendations</i>	6
SCENARIO 1 – DBBS RECOMMENDATIONS	7
<i>South Durham - Routes 5, 7, 12, & 41</i>	7
Route 5	7
Route 7	7
Route 12	7
Route 41	7
<i>Southwest Durham and South Durham - Routes 8, 10A, 10T, & 10B</i>	8
Route 8.....	8
Route 10A & 10T	8
Route 10B.....	9
<i>North Durham - Routes 9A, 9B, 17</i>	9
<i>North and East Durham - Routes 2, 21, 4, 13, 15, 16A, 16B, & BCC</i>	9
Route 2 & 21	9
Route 4.....	9
Route 13	10
Route 16A & 16B	10
Route 15	10
Bull City Connector.....	10
<i>North and East Durham - Routes 1A, 1B, & 3</i>	11
Routes 1A & 1B	11
Route 3.....	11
<i>West Durham – Routes 6A, 6B & 11</i>	11
Route 11	11
Routes 6A & 6B	11
SCENARIO 2 & 3 – DBBS RECOMMENDATIONS	12
<i>New Bus Routes</i>	12
More frequency on existing routes	12
New commuter routes	13
Improving the base level of service	13
Demand response to rural areas	14
<i>Capital Improvements</i>	14

About the Designing Better Bus Service – Sounding Board

What is Designing Better Bus Service in Durham (DBBS)

The City of Durham requested a thorough study of the transit system to assess the effectiveness of the service in meeting the needs of the City of Durham residents. This project is called Designing Better Bus Service in Durham. The result is a 3-year plan for route changes for 3 different funding scenarios:

- Scenario 1: Base Scenario – assumes current revenue streams
- Scenario 2: Minor Service Expansion - current revenue streams plus vehicle registration fee
- Scenario 3: Major Service Expansion - current revenue streams plus vehicle registration fee and half cent sales tax revenues

What is a Sounding Board

The Designing Better Bus Service - Sounding Board is a partner in the development of the recommendations for service improvements that will be included in the Final Draft Plan. The Sounding Board met regularly as the plan was being developed and provided valuable feedback to Triangle Transit and the consultant. At the end of the Designing Better Bus Service process, the Sounding Board developed this report in response to the Final Draft Plan. This report will be included along with the Final Draft Plan in the packet that is submitted to City Council for consideration. Since the Sounding Board members are current and interested DATA customers, the recommendations provided by the board is intended to provide guidance to the City Council as to how the plan will be received by DATA customers.

Sounding Board Members

The Designing Better Bus Service - Sounding Board is a group of 25 or so citizens assembled by Triangle Transit to review potential service changes. It is made up of volunteers from affected communities throughout the City of Durham selected to represent riders of different routes and representatives of different interest groups. The members were selected out of the applications received. The Designing Better Bus Service – Sounding Board members are:

Rashamaad Bass	Irene Fields	Martha Moore
Susan Brooks	Dawn Hill-Alston	George Roberson
Tarisha Burton	Royce Jones	Evelyn Scott
William Cagle	Justyn Lyde	David Smith
Lavonia Cayruth	Crystal Mason	David Uglow
Donnie Cox	Jennifer McDuffie	

Meeting Dates



The Sounding Board meetings were facilitated meetings designed to give members the opportunities to fully participate and provide input into the analysis and service changes. The Sounding Board met 8 times between October 2011 and June 2012 as the plan is being developed. The Sounding Board meetings were open to the public and most were located in downtown Durham at the Durham Armory at 220 Foster St (one was held at the Stanford L. Warren Branch Library).

October 18, 2011	February 28, 2012
November 29, 2011	March 27, 2012
January 10, 2012	April 24, 2012
January 31, 2012	May 15, 2012

Summary of Sounding Board Recommendations

The following is a summary of the Sounding Board recommendations for the Scenario 1 recommendations and Scenarios 2 & 3 recommendations. Scenario 1 includes proposed changes to routes that are funded through existing revenue sources. Scenarios 2 & 3 include new routes and capital projects that will be funded through additional revenues collected from a half cent sales tax and vehicle registration fee.

Scenario 1 – Sounding Board Recommendations

Route	Support	Not Support	Notes
1A/1B			
2/21			1 member did not support
3			1 member did not support
4			
5			2 in opposition; after more discussion, most in favor
6A/6B			
7			
8			
9A/9B			
10A			
10T			Suggestion to revisit the recommendation if the schools are not adequately covered with the 10T.
10B			
11			
12			1 member did not support
13			
15			
16A/16B			
17			
41			1 member did not support
BCC			

Scenario 2 & 3 – Sounding Board Recommendations

The Sounding Board supports the staff recommendations with the following adjustments:

1. **More frequency on existing routes:** Move Route 12 additional frequency up to be the second priority improvement and Route 8 additional frequency to the third priority.
2. **New Commuter Routes:** no adjustments recommended.
3. **Improving the base level of service:** First priority improvement should be to extend Sunday service on all DATA routes to 9 pm. Second priority improvement should be the additional weekend service on Route 20.
4. **Demand response to rural areas:** no comments taken as this service is not related to the DATA bus routes.

Safety should be a high priority for customers waiting at bus stops. Improvements to the waiting area at bus stops should be a top priority in the future.

Scenario 1 – DBBS Recommendations

The Designing Better Bus Service – Scenario 1 recommendations are route change proposals for the existing DATA routes. If approved, the route changes will be implemented in Oct 2012 and Jan 2013. The following sections include the Sounding Board discussion points and recommendations for each proposed route change included in the Scenario 1 recommendations.

South Durham - Routes 5, 7, 12, & 41

Route 5

- We are concerned about providing bus service for children going to school at Hillside High School on Fayetteville Rd and Cook Rd. The proposed Route 5 and Route 7 will stop at the corner, but some members are unsure about whether it is safe for the kids to cross that road? There is not a sidewalk along Cook Rd.
- The proposed Route 5 does not connect Fayetteville St with South Square Mall on University Dr. We discussed the possibility of adding a cross-town connector along MLK Pkwy in scenario 2 with additional funding. Several Sounding Board members did not like the elimination of the cross-town connector because it is inconvenient to have to go all the way downtown to go to South Square Mall.

Sounding Board Recommendation

3 members in favor; 2 in opposition; others unsure; after more discussion, most in favor

Route 7

- We agree that route 7 is too crowded. There are time problems along the route, although it gets downtown in time. Going back downtown, the route is speedy and direct, but once it hits MLK Pkwy and Roxboro, it gets too slow because it travels through neighborhoods. A solution to these issues is to make the route shorter.

Sounding Board Recommendation

All members supported the staff recommendation.

Route 12

- The Route 12 is one of the routes that most often late in arriving to Durham Station. The solution is to separate the southern section of Route 7 into a new route (Route 41). This route is to be connected to Route 12 to solve the on time performance problem.
- One member wanted to ensure that the on-time performance was addressed for the AM peak as well as the PM peak.

Sounding Board Recommendation

All members supported the staff recommendation.

Route 41

- We discussed how the Route 41 would be interlined with Route 12 during the day and Route 7 at night. The east-west section of Route 41 takes 45 min and north-south section of Route 12 takes 65

min. With these connected during the day, the combined time is under 2 hrs for the route. We talked about how there will be two buses running the combined route 12 and 41 so it will have more recovery time (an extra 10 min).

- We are still concerned about Route 12 being late and some members have doubts that the solution proposed by staff will work. For instance, will the extra 10 minutes be enough time?
- The staff proposal does not have night service to Woodcroft. One sounding board member who rides in Woodcroft says that most riders are commuters, so this proposal is ok.
- Other concerns were in regards to the elimination of service to Parkwood along Revere Rd. The concern is in regards to removing service from a neighborhood and an elementary school.

Sounding Board Recommendation

One Sounding Board member opposed the staff recommendation for Route 41 due to the removal of service from Parkwood. All others supported the staff recommendation.

Southwest Durham and South Durham - Routes 8, 10A, 10T, & 10B

Route 8

- The main problem being addressed here is the on-time performance. The route is only 70% on time especially at peak hours (to and from school). The staff recommendations include straightening the route significantly serving NCCU, across Alston Ave, to Durham Tech. The route will cover Sima and Bacon Sts. at night and Sundays.
- The routing change means that residents may have to walk further to get to bus stop. We discussed that the next closest bus stop is within a quarter mile and, if handicapped, residents can take the Access Van.
- A few Sounding Board members were concerned that kids can get to John Avery Boys and Girls Club located on the corner of Pettigrew St and Grant St. This concern was resolved through discussion of route particulars.
- We discussed how the Route 8 would go to hourly service on Saturdays and agreed that it makes sense given that Durham Tech does not have classes on Saturdays.

Sounding Board Recommendation

All members supported the staff recommendation.

Route 10A & 10T

- We talked about how on-time performance is an issue for this route with the route being late to timepoints 15% of the time. Most of the boarding activity is along Chapel Hill Rd.
- The proposed route change means that passengers can no longer get to Jordan High School on the Route 10. They will need to transfer to a connector bus at University Dr near the Kmart to get to Jordan, but the proposal does not go to Githens Middle School. The 10 Tripper would run every 30 min during the beginning and end of the school day. Ridership is low at Githens (< 10).

Sounding Board Recommendation

All members supported the staff recommendation with the caveat to revisit the recommendation if the schools are not adequately covered with the 10T.

Route 10B

- We talked about how the departure time on the Route 10B may be confusing for some people. It would be better if the route departed with the other routes at the top or bottom of the hour. Although, it is better to have service to the destinations on the Route 10B than not at all.
- We want to make sure that communication with the passengers is clear. We suggest to show the differences in routing and schedules from the Route 10A and 10B at Durham Station and on the vehicle.
- We suggest there be a “customer appreciation day” to educate the public on the route changes.

Sounding Board Recommendation

All members supported the staff recommendation.

North Durham - Routes 9A, 9B, 17

- Again, there are timing issues on Route 9. The recommendation involves putting an extra bus on Route 9 so that it is a 2 hour round trip (the 9A pattern will go to Northern High School; the 9B pattern serves Foxfire and Riverside High School). A bus would not go to Durham Tech north campus anymore but this is not a high frequency stop.
- The route is now longer but doesn’t require a transfer to get downtown.

Sounding Board Recommendation

All members supported the staff recommendation for 9A and 9B. We also decided that it was okay to eliminate Route 17.

North and East Durham - Routes 2, 21, 4, 13, 15, 16A, 16B, & BCC**Route 2 & 21**

- The issue on Route 2 and 21 is timing and overcrowding. The staff recommendation is to run the entire route 2A only once per hour and route 21 once/hour, which goes through NECD. At night, there would be no NECD loop on Route 21. The Route 16 would cover the section of Route 21 between NECD and the Village. Folks will need to transfer to Route 3 to get downtown at the Village. They will also need to transfer from 16 to 3 to get downtown at night.
- We think that it is hard for the community to have bus service only once per hour to downtown. The switch to a different route at night will be hard for folks. In discussion, good point made that all changes will be hard on those affected.

Sounding Board Recommendation

6 members supported the staff recommendation. 1 member did not support the Route 2 recommendations.

Route 4

- The problem with Route 4 is overcrowding. Proposed changes to other routes will take some of passengers. The only change to Route 4 is to pick up section of Chapel Hill St in the downtown and to add a stop at the Post Office.

Sounding Board Recommendation

All members supported the staff recommendation.

Route 13

- Route 13 will be cut because 2, 21 and 16 changes will cover entire route

Sounding Board Recommendation

All members supported the staff recommendation.

Route 16A & 16B

- We think the current Route 16 is too long. We also talked about the need for 15 min service along Holloway due to overcrowding on Route 3.
- The staff recommendation includes no service to Liberty St and different service at night and on Sunday. Route 16A will go to Southern High School (near Mineral Springs), but not at night. Route 16B will be more direct by not serving Southern.
- At night and Sundays, the staff recommendation involves a transfer between Route 3 and Route 16 at the Village. We are concerned about safety for people waiting at the Village. Young people are a concern. We recommend that staff work with the owners of the Village to increase the security presence there.
- At night and Sundays, we are concerned about the requirement of transfers and the cost implications for people. Staff needs to figure out a way to avoid increasing the cost for people who will be required to transfer who don't have to now.

Sounding Board Recommendation

All members supported the staff recommendation.

Route 15

- Only 55% of the time, is Route 15 on-time at a timepoint.
- The service is now only once an hour. Once Wake County or Orange County pass their transit referendum, we will have additional money to add to this route.

Sounding Board Recommendation

All members supported the staff recommendation.

Bull City Connector

- Any route changes are at the discretion of the City Council, but there probably won't be any money to add any service. The proposal includes ending service earlier at night due to low usage. The services would start at 7 am and end at 10 pm instead of 12am. They may add a bus at mid-day to keep the route on time.
- Changes in the BCC are no longer in the immediate plans. Three suggestions were made by Sounding Board members:
 - Extend free bus service with NCCU ID on Rt 5 and to add to Rt 7
 - Suggest to NCCU to extend their shuttle service to intersect with the existing BCC route (this may only be a few blocks)

- A petition is being circulated in NECD to extend BCC there instead of NCCU if funds become available for any type of extension. The City Council is aware of this petition effort and did not disapprove.

Sounding Board Recommendation

All members supported the staff recommendation.

North and East Durham - Routes 1A, 1B, & 3***Routes 1A & 1B***

- On-time performance is an issue for this route with the route being on-time at timepoints only 65% of the time.
- The solution is to split the route into A and B. The proposal will add a new connection at Guess Rd and Horton Rd and will connect with 9A.

Sounding Board Recommendation

All members supported the staff recommendation.

Route 3

- On-time performance is an issue.
- The recommendation is to go straight up Hardee St. Route 3 will not serve Fay or Robinhood (only about 20 people/day). For 20 folks that will be cut out, the nearest stop is at Cheek and Hardee (over 0.5 mi). Taking service away from Fay St is not a problem as DATA is moving ID creation down to Durham Station.

Sounding Board Recommendation

6 members supported the staff recommendation. 1 disagreed with the recommendation.

West Durham – Routes 6A, 6B & 11***Route 11***

- Route 11 is late to Durham Station 50% of the time.
- The recommendation is to shorten the route during daytime on Hillsborough and Neal Rd. At night and Sundays, it would run the full extent.
- We discussed how the Route 11 would go to hourly service on Saturdays and agreed that it makes sense given that ridership is lower.

Sounding Board Recommendation

All members supported the staff recommendation.

Routes 6A & 6B

- Instead of serving Science Dr. (students will walk extra block), 6A will go to American Village; Route 6B will go to Sparger Rd. Route 6A would serve Crest St only once per hour instead of every 30 min.

Sounding Board Recommendation

All members supported the staff recommendation for the 6A and 6B.

Scenario 2 & 3 – DBBS Recommendations

The Scenario 2 recommendations will be funded through the vehicle registration fee levied by the Durham County Commissioners. The Scenario 3 recommendations will be funded through the vehicle registration fee and the half cent sales tax. This additional funding source was approved by 60% of the Durham County voters in November 2011.

New Bus Routes

There are 4 types of services included in the DBBS Final Plan:

1. More frequency on existing routes
2. New commuter routes
3. Improving the base level of service
4. Demand response to rural areas

The following sections include the Sounding Board discussion points and recommendations for the types of services included in the Scenario 2 & 3 recommendations.

More frequency on existing routes

There were several discussion points about additional frequency on existing routes:

- The additional frequency on Route 8 during peak hours and Route 12 all day is more important than the other frequency additions. Route 12 should be second priority and Route 8 should be third.
- Some folks were confused about how the priorities were determined and it was re-explained that it was based on ridership numbers and evidence of overcrowding.
- Someone asked about Route 3 and was assured that its frequency would increase as part of Scenario 1. Staff note: This additional frequency is achieved with Route 3 and Route 16.
- Another member asked about shuttles to MLK, James and Nation and was told that would come up later in the discussion.

Sounding Board Recommendation

The Sounding Board unanimously supported the priority list of services with the following ranking.

Adjusted Priority List

1. Rt 7 – 15 min headways
2. Rt 12 – 30 min headways on weekdays
3. Rt 8 – 15 min headways during peak hours
4. Rt 16 – 30 min headways during school hours (this may be only one or two extra trips, will depend on piloting testing of increase)
5. Rt 1 – 15 min headways
6. Rt 4 – 15 min headways

7. DRX – 30 min headways during peak hours
8. 800 – 15 min headways during peak hours between UNC and Southpoint
9. 700 – 15 min headways during peak hours between Durham Station and Regional Transit Center

New commuter routes

There were several discussion points about the new commuter routes:

- One Sounding Board member asked if the commuter routes were intended to serve Durham City residents. Staff indicated that the commuter routes were likely to serve people who worked in the City of Durham but lived outside the city limits.
- The commuter route between North Durham (park and ride lot already available at Durham County Stadium) will run every 30 min for 3 hours in AM and 3 hours in PM. These will be express buses with few stops as times need to stay reasonable in order to attract commuter use
- Rougemont route will only happen when the park and ride is put in.
- The Hillsborough/Mebane route will only happen if Orange County passes its transit tax too.
- Duke offers a free “GoPass” to workers willing to take the bus rather than park; it was suggested that VA should do the same.

Sounding Board Recommendation

The Sounding Board unanimously supported the priority list without amendment.

Improving the base level of service

There were several discussion points about improving the base level of service:

- Several Sounding Board members felt strongly that extending Sunday service on all DATA routes to 9 pm should be moved to priority number 1.
- Another member suggested that new Saturday and Sunday service to South Square on Route 20 should be a higher priority (this will be dependent on whether Route 10 is changed and Route 20 is eliminated).
- As some of these routes (405, 15, 800 and 700) are partially funded by other counties, this order of priorities may change again after input from other counties.
- It was suggested that routes to malls should have 30 minute service until the mall closes at 9 pm, but this suggestion was withdrawn after other bus riders said it isn’t difficult to plan errands, etc. in mall areas to make the current hourly schedule work.
- Other order remained the same 405 then 15 then 800/700

Sounding Board Recommendation

The Sounding Board unanimously supported the priority list of services with the ranking adjustment.

Adjusted Priority List

1. Extend Sunday service of all DATA routes to 9 pm
2. New Saturday and Sunday service to South Square on Route 20
3. 405 – 30 min headways during midday and Sat
4. 405 – add Sunday service

5. 15 – add Sunday service
6. 800 & 700 – Extend Sat service to 11pm
7. 800 & 700 – add Sunday service

Demand response to rural areas

The Sounding Board did not discuss this item as it is controlled by Durham County rural services.

Capital Improvements

- Please keep safety at the bus stops a top priority; member was assured that this would come before other capital improvements, especially as regards using Durham funds. There are real concerns at Village stops according to several members.
- Park and Ride lots will be considered in both phase 2 and phase 3:
 - Phase 2 – Southpoint, Durham County Stadium, Rougemont
 - North Roxboro Rd, Patterson Place, Woodcroft (at Hope Valley)

Sounding Board Recommendation

Not voted on as all of these are dependent on multiple factors and multiple sources of funding.